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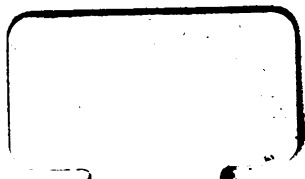
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FRIENDSHIP AND OTHER POEMS

BY
B. H. NADAL

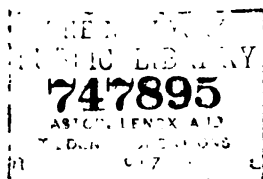


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NEW YORK**

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FRIENDSHIP

A PLEASANT ship is Friendship,
Laden with tears and smiles,
Across the storm-swept ocean
It sails from Friendly Isles.

Sweet chords hum in its rigging
And thrill each straining rope.
The wind that fills its canvas
Blows from the Cape Good Hope.

It enters every harbor
To land its precious wares,
That he may take who needs them,
And he may have who cares.

PEACE

O'ER our wide pastures yet unscarred by war
The summer reigns and sweet from near and far
Come sounds of pleasant waters, songs of birds
And the dumb pathos of the lowing herds.

The grain is ripening and the rivers flow,
On the broad Hudson ships go to and fro.
Rimming the confines of the peaceful land
The oceans sleep — the misty mountains stand.

Verdant and boundless, sunk in ease we lie
While golden suns drive through a cloudless sky,
A blinded Samson, sprawling, helpless, shorn.
As nations whom the wolves of war have torn.

Dreaming, we hear vast armies march and wheel
Or like two endless Pythons clad in steel,
Writhing and roaring with the maddening pain
League after league lie deadlocked on the plain.

Great God Efficiency! Fire and Blood and Steel!
You make the women weep, the planets reel,
Europe, a factory whose output is ghosts
Or human seconds, armless, legless hosts,

Blind, maimed and crutched, to grope or limp or crawl
Back to the roofless hut or ruined hall.
The roof-tree of all Europe's fair domain
Writhes like a sapling in a gusty rain.

Great God Efficiency! We are mad to dream
That you are frightened by an Eagle's scream;
That walls of flesh or hearts of steel can save
A Belgium or a China from the grave.

Peace!! Peace!! Peace!! Peace!! Peace do I hear
you cry?
Peace with dishonor! Better far to die!
Pour out your treasure! Arm your valiant sons,
Nor leave them naked to the Great God's guns.

PANAMA

MAP pictured, South America floats idly in the ocean
Humped not unlike a camel or old Santa Claus's
pack,
Hair hung upon the Isthmus with an eastward swaying
motion,
The snow-tipped Corderillas crawling all along its back.

A giant cornucopia rich as all the earth can show,
Pierced by the fierce Equator and the milder Capricorn,
Filled with rivers, lakes and forests, condors, jaguars, ice
and snow,
Mountains, monkeys and republics from Darien to the
Horn.

Languid in the tropic sunshine, drenched by Equatorial
showers,
Prey too oft of venal rulers vexing the unhappy land,
Or if peace in Freedom's guise reign where the drowsy
jaguar cowers,
'Tis the opiate of the sword in the tyrant's mailed hand.

Not thus her Northern sister clingeth weakly to another.
Frost anchored in the Arctic, she struggles for the pole,
Her one maimed arm extended to her giant Asian brother,
Within her snowy bosom guards stout Hudson's valiant
soul.

Her cities hum, her harbors teem, her highways are of steel.

Both virile and aspiring, she is resolute and strong.
While palpitating engines move each busy turning wheel,
Electric thrills of power course all her veins along.

These Siamese twin Continents held by an Isthmian cord,
League after league far reaching toward world wide
 sundered poles
To Colon's rotting caravels, the Westward sea had barred,
Nosing like lost leviathans among the vexing shoals.

Wise surgeon, you have cut the bond to unite, not to sever,
And since despite the adverse fates and all unlucky stars
The blue Pacific's placid fields have joined the Gulf forever,
To grazing ships of all the seas let down the pasture bars.

Then joyful watch old Neptune's flocks Eastward and
 Westward going
Through Darien's dustless boulevard to distant ports
 unseen,
Brigs, schooners, yachts and battle ships, vast liners
 hoarsely blowing,
The creeping tramp and battered barque and ancient
 brigantine.

GRAMERCY PARK

THERE is a garden in a city's heart,
A sunken garden where the roaring mart
Has shot aloft its many storied towers
And one great spire that chimes the passing hours.

A fair green island in a sea of stone
Where one may come and sit and dream alone
Lulled by the city's hum — the muffled roar
Like distant breakers on a rock bound shore.

Sacred the spot is to a Century's past,
Hallowed by memories and the shadows cast
By pleasant mansions whose dear children roam
Far from that garden and the ancient home.

Here Hamlet dwelt and dreamed and passed away
Building a shrine for love — not his dull clay;
Trask, Bigelow, Gilder — Tilden too — shrewd wilted
Spinster statesman whom his country jilted.

And where his aged feet in slippered ease
Paused on the brink of death's uncharted seas
The tide of life from every land and clime
Pours through its portals till the midnight chime.

Ah, gentle ghost, how fares thy broadcast fame
Drowned in the revels of the Mi Careme,
Where Art and Music thrive and poets come
To tell the world the Muses are not dumb?

Hooking my arm the ghost said, "Let us go
Down to the grill where wine and wisdom flow,
Where balls are clicked and violet smoke wreaths curled
And men may feel the pulse of all the world."

"No problem, friend, from Mexico to Van
E'er touched the hearts or vexed the soul of man
But found its echo in this smoke wreathed den
Where friend meets friend and men are brother men."

Back to our garden! Mark the snowy spire —
A Wetterhorn of commerce tipped with fire,
Reading life's riddle by the chiming hour
Or in the flaming beacon of the tower.

Thanks, sister island, from whose verdant marge
The friendly lighthouse gleams so fair and large,
Soaring through mist or in the cloudless blue
Hail, sister, hail — a "Gramercy to you."

Tilden's home is now the National Arts Club.

THE STATUE SPEAKS

YES — I am Liberty — at least they call me so ;
If to be anchored here in rain and frost and snow,
Prey to the tempest and to all the winds that blow —
If this be liberty then you may call me so.
Oh, how my arm does ache with holding up this torch,
Task scarce begun — through frosts that burn and suns
that scorch,
A modern vestal stylite where the blizzards swirl,
The tide-rip rages and the gentle small seas curl.
Yes, it is pleasant here, when through the Summer night
The velvet zephyrs soothe and round my torches' light
The myriad foolish insects weave in and out the glare
As if each vainly sought for some lost lover there.
So hour by hour I watch, as ebbs and flows the tide,
The steady burning stars where ships at anchor ride,
Where ghostly vessels flit across the bay's dark floor
And transit's monster glow-worms crawl from shore to
shore.
Northward the city glows — each bridge an arch of
light,
The waters black beneath and all the stars in sight.
Expectant of the dawn whispers the strengthening breeze,
Lightens the East, and rustling at my feet, the trees
Now stir with life, and on the far horizon's rim
The new morn redly gleams and all the stars grow dim.
From out the bosom of the wide and misty deep
Mother of winds and storms — where stars and planets
sleep

Up starts the Sun! A miracle — new born each day —
The blazing God to whom all living creatures pray.
“Good morning, Liberty,” the dear god seems to cry,
Just as last night his dying brother said, “Good-bye.”

THE CENSUS

New York City — A. D. 2000 . . . 15,000,000

By Hendrik Hudson, the Third, of the Borough of Poughkeepsie.

AMAZING, huge, colossal, vast, inspiring,
Millions on millions to the ocean's marge
Add stone to stone — add soul to soul untiring,
Who cares for units if the sum be large?

More palaces whose shuttered fronts are mocking
Anæmic, swarming children of the slums,
Hell's kitchens — myriad tenements where flocking
The spawn of all the nations breeds and comes.

More churches, temples, towers, tunnels, trolleys,
More slimy docks where fetid water flows,
More bad, more good, more poverty, more follies,
Insatiate still, see how the monster grows.

Feeding on farms, on forests, meadows, flowers,
Licking up landscapes in three sovereign states,
Turning to offal what its greed devours,
Rots the Atlantic at old Hudson's gates.

Progress, my friends? Ah, yes, but whither tending?
Where fruit rots fast pile up the golden spheres?
Add stone to stone — add soul to soul unending —
If this be progress, dread the marching years.

NEXT!

A NIGHTMARE OF EFFICIENCY

HANS of round paunch and triple plated fat
Lord of ten throne-like chairs — an autocrat
Who waves his sceptre of sharp, shining steel,—
Clips, shaves, anoints you till at last you feel
Enthroned and perfumed like a monarch's heir,
The while he robs you of your surplus hair,
Deftly unfrocks you, bawls the solemn text,
The forward march of time — the fatal N E X T.
But while he droned of war — of this and that
I drowsed and dreamed I was an autocrat;
An autocrat, alas, upon whose senses stole
Black night — dream haunted cavern of the soul.
A dream within a dream — a vision dread
While old Hans clipped and snipped my sacred head.

To me it seemed that centuries had passed.
I found myself within a cavern vast
That stretched from Finland to the Caspian Sea.
I — Emperor — King and the Autocracy
Sat on a bootblack stand of polished brass
In barber chairs all lit with flaring gas.
A surly peasant shined each royal boot
And stopped to growl, "My Lord, the other foot."
Miles, miles away, horned devils stoked a fire
That lit that cavern's floor of oozing mire
And by that flare was one great pillar shown
That held aloft the cavern's awful dome.

And round that pillar by a mighty chain
A dragon tramped and stirred the boggy plain.
His mouth was blood. Swords were his bristling crest,
His eyes exploding bombs. He wore a vest,
Pink shirt, high collar and a crimson tie
All stamped with skulls and horrid things that fly.
Choked by the galling limit of his chain
And pulled aloft he paws the air in vain,
While flaring like great furnaces at night
His eyes are black or filled with glowing light.
Then from his throttled throat comes pouring hot
All things that are and everything that's not.
Colons and semi-colons — Japs and Finns,
Blanks, asterisks and dynamite in tins.
All things that end in Ski and Off and Vitch,
Jew, Pole and Moslem, peasant, poor and rich.
Griffons and giants, monkeys, dogs and cats,
Hovels and houses, battleships and flats,
Grand Dukes and Kings and palaces and things
Out of his maw in cataract he flings.
God! How that pillar swayed with groan and strain
As Anarch tugged and gnawed his galling chain.
The roof tree of all Europe's fair domain
Bent like a sapling in a gusty rain.
Lord of a dozen realms — an Empire's head,
King by divine right and sovereign dread,
I — trembling and forsaken by my power,
Am helpless as the meanest things that cower.
O'er-head I hear vast armies march and wheel
Or like two endless pythons clad in steel

Writhing and roaring with the maddening pain
League after league lie deadlocked on the plain.

rest,

Great God Efficiency!! Fire and Blood and Steel
Who makes the women weep — the planets reel,
Europe a factory whose output is ghosts
Or human seconds, armless, legless hosts,
Blind, maimed and crutched, to grope or limp or crawl
Back to the roofless hut or ruined hall —
Great God Efficiency!! you to whom we pray,
Is this the outcome of your splendid sway?
Song — Art — Invention — all that time has wrought,
All things that soar — the Zeppelins of thought —
Fair Hope and Pity — bi-planes of the soul,
Are these chimeras — war the final goal?
Peace but the beast that licks his wounds and scars,
Sharpens his fangs and dreams of endless wars?

A PROTEST

AGAINST SWINBURNE'S FINE BUT BLOODTHIRSTY SONNET

IF you were he and in your poet hands
Fortune had placed the crown and marching from afar
Came struggling hosts to parley with their Czar,
While dread clouds like a pall, o'er his wide lands
Hung, shrouding him where, he, unhappy, stands
What would you do, oh, crimson ink pots Czar,
Lord of the lexicon, of words that burn and scar?
Weak may we be or strong, yet bound by bands
Of circumstance and custom stronger far than we.
Weep for the slaughtered — yes, and curse if curses fly
To where all wrongs are righted and the angels lie.
Pity the Czar — few men need more than he,
Born to an unsought throne, perchance to die
By the flung bomb while ruin fills the sky.

In 1905 a great mob marched to interview the Czar of Russia. It is said that Father Gapon, a priest, who led them was afterward executed for treachery by his own comrades. No great capital in the world would allow a vast mob to march upon its Governors. Mobs have been repeatedly fired upon in our cities. Deplorable as the incident was, Swinburne's splendid but bloodthirsty sonnet seemed hardly just. This protest was in part cabled to England as a reply by the *New York Times* and was widely copied.

A CZAR — 1905

A PASTEBOARD autocrat, a despot out of date,
A fading planet in the glare of day,
A flickering candle in the sun's bright ray,
Burnt to the socket. Fruit left too late
High on a barren bough, ripe till it's rotten,
By God forsaken and by time forgotten.
Watching the crumbling edges of his lands;
A spineless God to whom dumb millions pray,
From Finland in the North to far Cathay,
Lord of a frost-bound continent he stands.
Her seeming ruin his dim mind appals
And in the frozen stupor of his sleep
He hears dull thunders pealing as she falls
And mighty fragments dropping in the deep.

This sonnet was written when Russia was harassed by both internal agitation and a victorious foe. The Czar, if nothing more, seems an amiable and well intentioned man.

"Your Majesty!" The Councillor had found him reclining on a lounge in a remote chamber. "I am not Your Majesty — I am tired," wearily replied the Czar.

A general who said rats were gnawing at his stomach and who used to sleep curled up on the floor of his tent with a campstool held to the pit of his stomach, was heard to groan: "Oh, why did President Davis make me a general?"

The Son of Heaven, aged three, at his coronation in China, eluded his nurse in a careless moment and was discovered rapidly backing down the steps of the throne on all fours to liberty and happiness.

Authentic or not, these incidents are significant.

WHY NOT?

SILENT tonight the snow sifts slowly down
O'er steppe and mountain, city, lake and town,
While in the sky gleams not a single star
Where sleep the bearded children of the Czar.

Respite till dawn! Alas! Alas! who knows?
Wolves in her folds and on her confines, foes.
Hear you no voices calling from afar
Unhappy Anarchs, most unhappy Czar?

We from those heights by your dumb millions sought,
We for whose gain the centuries have wrought,
Stretch to your aid our mute appealing hands,
Unhappiest of all unhappy lands.

You on whose life has set the star of hope,
You with whose task what man would dare to cope,
Last of a famous line, the heir of fate,
Friends, friends to help, we are — not foes to hate

Dynastic pride? Pride of your country's past?
Add to that pride the noblest and the last
That Russia is too great to hold in thrall
Her valiant sons when they for freedom call.

This appeared a short time before the United States Government was asked to arbitrate the Russian-Japanese War.

The last verse was intended as an appeal to the Czar not to let pride stand in the way of peace or the granting of self-government to his people.

BELGIUM

Oh, Germany!
Mother of song — home of the arts,
Whose seers have taught us — at whose breast
 we've fed,
Flesh of our flesh, though you had won our hearts,
Your brow is awful and your hands are red.

Talk not of treaties nor whose blame the strife.
These were not foes whose blood is on your hands.
Nations can die. Honor is more than life.
So Belgium said. Heroic there she stands.

You were not Huns nor they a savage race;
A sister nation, skilled in all the arts.
What madness seized you? Hide your burning face
As we hide ours to ease our aching hearts.

Did she ask pity? — plead the desperate strife?
God knows she had ten reasons for your one.
Nations can die. Honor is more than life.
So Belgium stands resplendent in the sun.

To hear her story, oh you peaceful lands,
Dull stones could weep and from the burning sands
Well up great fountains at whose thirsty brink
A hundred blazing suns might vainly drink.

Vine clad and castled flowed the river Rhine,
Her verdant banks drowsed in the summer haze,
While Belgium's plains you drenched with awful wine
Wrung from her heart on those same golden days.

Oh, Germany!

Mother of song — home of the arts,
Whose seers have taught us. At whose breast we've
fed;
Flesh of our flesh, though you have won our hearts
Your crime is damning and your hands are red.

WARNING! — THE LUSITANIA

Not a plea for war nor an indictment of the Germans as a people,
but a satire on their warning and an indictment of her rulers.

I GIVE warning, warning, warning, to all babes and
 maids and mothers

 That I have no creed but slaughter — leave shame,
 honor, peace to others.

I give warning, warning, warning; I give warning to all
 nations

I'm the one efficient slaughterer of all God's brute
 creations.

The road hog of all Europe and the wild beast of the world,
I make war on peaceful hamlets where the smoke of hearth
 fires curled,

Ask dishonor of my sister — ravage all her teeming plain
Strike you back you maddened victim — See the charnel
 of Louvain.

I give warning, warning, warning that life is more than
 honor,

That the world shall be my victim with the brand of Cain
 upon her,

I give warning, warning, warning that I've taught my
 splendid people

That the shambles is an altar and the cannon is a steeple.

I give warning, warning, warning to all you who sail the
main

You must scotch me like a viper or bind me with a chain
For I have no code but slaughter — behold me, oh, you
nations,

The most efficient slaughterer of all God's brute creations.

Oh you million, million Germans in the land where men are
free,

Save! Oh, save me from this madness, flay me, scourge
me, till I see,

Lest like the fabled monster ringed by a world afire
I strike my own fangs inward and in my shame expire.

WARNING!! WARNING!! WARNING!!

ARBITRATION

Oh, Germany!

Although the red fires shot athwart the sky
And the wild Heavens flamed from sea to sea
At that mad stroke, to see our children die,
We must not hate you — we are sane and free.

Oh, Germany!

Don't you hear us calling, calling from the sea
For the sake of all our brothers in the strife?
Don't you hear the wireless humming o'er the sea
Call you back to honor, hope and peace and life?

All pride of race, achievement, fame and power
Lay on the altar of the common good,
Then for all races may have come the hour
When men are brothers and not cannon's food.

No nation asked your life or wished you harm.
Believe us you are wrong. It was not so.
It was not sane to grasp in wild alarm
The sword, and stake all on a gambler's throw.

'Tis false to say that all men are not brothers.
'Twas ours to prove that thought a specious lie
Where millions of your race can meet all others
Year after year, work, love and live and die.

Oh, Germany!

Hark to the sighs of children, maids and mothers.

Think of the ravaged fields and hearts and homes.

**Then say—"Where am I right or wrong, my
brothers?"**

Hark to the cry — Peace! Peace! At last it comes.

THE STOCK EXCHANGE

WHAT'S the broth the brokers brew,
The seeming maddened reckless crew?
Stocks and bonds are juiceless things,
The cards and chips of money kings.
Stand but at the cauldron's brim
And tell me what you see within?
Horny hands and sweat of toil
Bended backs that dig the soil,
Cotton, sugar, oil and grain,
What runs on land or ploughs the main.
Hovels, palaces and flats
With autos, horses, dogs and cats;
Fortunes wrecked by fate's stern laws,
Hands uptossed that grasp at straws;
All that's merry, gay or glad,
Whatever's desperate, lost or sad,
Boils madly in the bubbling stew —
The kind of broth the brokers brew.

TO HENRY GEORGE

On the 25th Anniversary of the Publication of "Progress and Poverty"

THOUGH to a dim uncharted land our thoughts to-night are borne,
Oh, Captain of a gallant band, we do not come to mourn.

Among the nobler wiser shades who haunt that viewless space
Your genius like a glowing star shines in its firm fixed place.

You, dreamer of a splendid dream, a time still far away,
Battering monopoly's brazen gates, hoping that in your day
Justice might reign through all the Earth because you led the way,
Prone on the Century's threshold fell, a martyr in the fray.

Now in this new born, pregnant time we watch earth's warring hosts —
What of the future? Can you say, great company of ghosts?
We do not know. We can not tell. We may not read aright.
We wait. We watch. We guard the flame his spirit set alight.

A PORTRAIT. WHO?

Written at the Starting of the Panama Canal and not
Inapplicable Now

SKELETON at a monopolist's feast
A radical in the enemy's camp
Subtle but honest, one with Nature's stamp,
A politician, soldier, author, priest.
Bold to conceive yet wary to attain
The ground from which a distant height he'll gain.
Born to the wise control of man and beast,
Chafes at the barriers of his fenced domain.
The Centaur charges, stops short in his way,
Reined to his quivering haunches at the chasm's edge,
Then takes the leap, lands safely on a ledge,
His sole support perhaps a wisp of HAY.
Cowboy, statesman, skilled in Jiu Jitsu,
Wrestling with fate, is one of fortune's few.

THE EPITAPH

ON A SCRAP OF TIN NAILED ON A BOARD

HIER RUHT IN GOTT MARIA OTT GEBOREN ZOGG
SCHLAFE WOHL IN ALLER EWIGKEIT
DEIN BILD STEHT VOR UNS LICHT UND REIN
VERGESSEN SOLLST DU NIEMALS SEIN.

SLEEP peacefully, Maria Ott,
Whose maiden name was Zogg
While this pathetic scrap of tin
Time's memory may jog.

The poet says your image stands
Forever pure and bright
And you a radiant soul have fled
Into the Ewigkeit.

I never knew you in the flesh
If you were young and fair
Or if you were a toil-worn soul
With scant and silvered hair.

Perhaps ere this, Maria Ott,
Instead of scrap of tin
Affection may have laid your bones
A marble tomb within.

I know a thousand I've passed by
Whose mortal frames might groan
Beneath a solid granite shaft
Or ponderous slab of stone.

Strange fate indeed, Marie Ott,
Whose maiden name was Zogg,
You shall not be forgot by me
While through this vale I jog.

SONG OF THE TIP

I UNMAKE men — teach them to sue
For wage they boldly should demand,
Or ask for more than is their due,
With servile mien and open hand.

I follow at the heels of wealth,
To gather largess at me flung,
I bully, cringe, and get by stealth
Of graft's long ladder, lowest rung.

The shadow of that monstrous bulk,
Of golden calf I am the bleat,
You fill my palm or else I sulk
And do my work with leaden feet.

Children of those of all men peer,
The sturdy men of shore and ship,
Of farmer, craftsman, pioneer,
We take our graft and crave our tip.

THE THREE OF US

The Three of us is all of us. In Memory of a Pleasant and Profitable Evening.

A MID the city's surging tide,
Grim mother of our human wrecks
Your play's a verdant isle espied
Whose grassy slopes the sunshine flecks.

What we are wont to call unreal
The painted scene — the acted part
The deeper things of life reveal
By virtue of your truthful art.

You reach the source of happy tears,
Of simple joys, the common fate,
And cheerful sunshine now appears
Where fogs had dimmed the mind of late.

And so we thank you from the heart
You who conceived and you who act
Twin souls in love — sisters in art
Your happy isle is solid fact.

For though the centuries roll away
And this old world sink 'neath time's tide
When we have spent our little day
Somehow we know these things abide.

HOOK MOUNTAIN

CHILDREN we are of the great God Pan
Who marvel much by the river
How ruthless man can mar the plan
Of the wise and bounteous giver.

We hear afar the sound of war
As the rocks they rend and shiver.
They blast and mine and rudely scar
The pleasant banks of the river.

What if your city storms the sky
Your streets creep on and multiply?
Can puny might rear cliffs on high?
Can you give us back our river?

Hook Mountain is the most striking example of the destruction of the Hudson's banks, which still goes on.

It is most insidious and as stupid as it is wasteful of one of the great assets of the State. The rock and clay are soon exhausted. The damage can not be repaired in thousands of years.

THE ALBANY TOW

“SAY, friend, it’s durned monotonous
This lazy creeping tow,”
Drawled he, as swirling round his barge,
Old Hudson’s waters flow.

The floating village forged ahead
Majestic, steady, slow,
The wind-etched bay, the sky, the hills
Flushed with the afterglow.

Let night’s great glow worms churn the tide
While tugs and motors hum
And down the rails with frantic shriek
The Western flyers come.

While vineyards, farms and towns glide by
Where fading sunsets glow,
I somehow in this hustling age
Am glad some things are slow.

Though like the *Half Moon* we may fare,
Northward and Southward slow,
Old man, I rather think I like
This lazy creeping tow.

OLD HUDSON HE SAILED

Ballad from the play of Hendrik Hudson the Third.

Margaret — Tell me about old Hudson, Uncle Jim.

OLD Hudson he sailed and he sailed and he sailed
In the quaint and the queer *Half Moon*
And the river was bare,
Not a sail anywhere,
But the sail of the old *Half Moon*.

Not a house or a barn or a steeple he saw
As he gazed from the old *Half Moon*,
Not a steamer was there
Not a tow anywhere,
As he stood on the old *Half Moon*.

No shriek of an engine or rumble of freight
Nor toot of a tug was heard
But the *Half Moon* sailed,
And it sailed and it sailed
Like a quaint and a queer old bird.

If a dainty white cloud had sprouted with wings
And silver oars shot from its side
You would think it was queer
My dear, mighty queer
And open your eyes very wide.

So the Indians thought the Great Spirit had come
From the land where the good people go,
And the very tough crew
Were white angels too
From the land where the good people go.

From yonder and yonder from bay and from cove
They flocked to the great vessel's side
And found that the crew
Were people like you
And white only out, not inside.

Now fancy I'm Hudson and on the *Half Moon*:
Shut your eyes as tight as you can
Are you ready? Now — Go!
They start races so
And Hendrik Hudson I am.

FREE VERSE DEPARTMENT

If a writer can give value to his thought, poetical or otherwise, by launching it upon a sea of white paper who needs to object?

But the exponents of Free Verse claim to have risen from a lower to a higher plane of expression — to be brilliant winged creatures who have escaped from the cramped chrysalis and are flashing in the sunlight of freedom. James Oppenheim, the most gifted of them, compares Free Verse to an aëroplane which can go anywhere while other poets are engines crawling upon a track. This logic is as inverted as many of their sentences. An aëroplane can not turn angles.

In the hands of a master the restraint and limitations of the vehicle seems to project the thought with power and clothe it with beauty. In his hands it becomes an aëroplane that soars and mounts to every quarter of the heavens. Free Verse is rather an aëroplane bumping along the ground and making desperate efforts to get up and stay up.

Carlyle says the only excuse for writing poetry — in poetical form he means — is that you have something to say and can say it better in that way than any other. A great poet in thought and feeling, the expansion of Carlyle's works into Free Verse would alone suffice to blow up every Carnegie library in the country.

ODE TO VERS LIBRE

OH, careless muse, uncombed if nothing worse,
A kitchen maid — the Mary Ann of verse,
Pounding raw steak, rattling each pot and pan
And beating tattoos on the garbage can.
So seldom sweet or fair, you say you sing
While jangling discords make the welkin ring;
Virile at times — poetical by chance,
A rhythmic rival of St. Vitus' dance.
Oh, Liberty, thou motherest many a crime
And now would wring the neck or knell of rhyme.

Oh, yes, we know that you can answer back
That rhyme's oft trivial — Pegasus a hack
Traveling a highway through a dreary bog,
His burden doggerel and his pace a jog.
But let some Keats appear upon the scene
How gay his welcome and how changed his mien.
Responsive to his master's least desire,
Old Pegasus — a stallion shod with fire —
Trots, paces, ambles, jumps and runs at will
A thing all impulse, power, grace and thrill.
Heavenward he springs, and scorning to alight,
Bursts like a rocket on the blackest night
Into a thousand bright, unfading stars,
The deathless songs that wait at Heaven's bars.

If poetry be but the soul in flight
If we have read birds, worlds and stars aright,
If they must soar in circling rhythmic curve
And from those lines of beauty only swerve,
When some harsh fate has sought them as they fly
And, mangled, torn them from the azure sky,
Why then, Vers Libre, stick close to Mother Earth,
Mishapen, crude and broken-winged at birth.
Be angular. Chop lines off anywhere
Or be the nude descending of the stair.
While she is sleeping, steal the Muse's clothes
And snatch the jewels from the brow of prose.
Hop on one foot, or like the centipede
Crawl through four lines of type at wriggling speed.
Be occult, mystic, cryptic if you like
Oh, Hobo of the soul! Oh, tramp upon life's hike!
Be graphic, bold, be free, be anything,
But don't, oh, slattern Muse, attempt to sing.

THE BLIZZARD — SEPTEMBER 13, 1916

FROM SHARK RIVER ANTHOLOGY

A Horrible Example — a Long Way After Whitman and Masters.

I SING the exploit of Ladan — Ladan Nossirrah
Dranreb,

The guest of Wallace Sawyer of Passyunk Avenue.

Bards of Asbury Park and Avon, New Jersey, aid me.

I sing the myriad branches

Upon which were strung like translucent beads

The crystalline jewels of the Ice King.

I sing the blizzard — the level driven sleet,

The ice encrusted roads and sidewalks;

And so where motors honk and walkers plod

Ladan of 122 East Seventeenth Street, Manhattan;

Ladan, lover of the winged skate,

The flashing blade and the swallow flight,

Glided swiftly toward the much sounding sea.

But alas, some miscreant, some strewer of ashes, lost to
all the finer feelings that ennoble and dignify our common
humanity, had sullied the crystalline purity of
the ice encrusted sidewalk and down he came like
some tall pine before the woodman's ax, busting his
bifocals and proceeding onward for many inches upon
a much too prominent proboscis.

Nothing daunted he arose and broom in hand to sweep the
snow drift from his path, plunged onward, waving his
domestic excalibur, to the board walk and the much
sounding sea.

Then on — ever onward, undaunted, undismayed, he sped
Through swirling wind borne snow spume,
Through blinding sleet and treacherous hidden pitfalls,
His flashing blades crunching the ice encrusted planks.
Onward through Asbury Park,
Onward through Ocean Grove — Home of the saints,
Onward through Bradley Beach
To the deserted village of Avon,
To the shores of the Shark River
And the desolate mansion of the Sawyers where we once
 held high carnival with wine and jest and song with
 noble hospitality,
But now alas, forlorn, untenanted,
Save by the memories of those feasts and joyous jests.
And there high upon a white pillar
While the blizzard swept and swirled
In wreathed mists of snow Ladan Nosirrah Dranreb
Wrote the chronicle of his deed.
Homeward sped Ladan in the blizzard's teeth
Wind nor' nor'west, but what cared he,
Gliding ever onward while the envious ocean gnashed its
 snow white teeth upon the supine beach — thunder-
 ing curses,
Envious because rage as it might it could never forget its
 thousand crimes nor the myriad skeleton ships that
 lay in its dank and oozing depths.
And thus Ladan, the stormy petrel of Manhattan, fought
 his way
To the haven of Passyunk Avenue.
His journey done,

The victory won,
And another record broken in the history of Monmouth
County.

I sing — I sing — but Ghosts of Whitman — is this
singing?

¹ Time to Shark River and back and time of composition, one hour and five minutes. But, as Byron said, "Easy writing may be — hard reading." "The Giant and the Problem," which follows, is an experiment in expansion. It is about one-third of a prose phantasy which occupied six pages in *The Single Tax Review*, translated into Vers Libre with little alteration of phraseology.

THE GIANT AND THE PROBLEM

A PROSE POEM

ONE foot planted in the Atlantic
The other in the Pacific
His cerulean coat tails flapping in the Gulf
And dyeing it a still deeper blue,
Stands a colossal figure.
One hand is upon the Hawaiian Islands,
The other grasps the far distant Philippines
And the fur on his bell crowned hat
Scrapes Orion and the Milky Way.
Placing his hands upon his knees, and forgetting his out-
lying possessions he bends over the hill wrinkled map
beneath him with an intent and perplexed look upon
his shrewd and kindly face.
Over his submerged feet — like the handle of a fan —
Converge the liquid highways from every quarter of the
globe.
Now he looks upon the fertile cotton fields,
The red clay hills of the South,
Now upon the lake besprinkled and deer haunted forests
of the North;
Now his eyes traverse the continent
To the store house of the blizzard,
Or milder Oregon,
Or sweeping Southward, he studies
The arid sun-baked plains of the Southwest,

But most intently, most anxiously does he look upon that
great region extending far Westward from the
Atlantic.

Crowded with cities, great and small
With rivers, lakes and mountains,
Fertile with grain and fruits,
Where the millions toil unceasingly
And thread their way restlessly from city to city.
The gravity and perplexity upon his face deepens
As he studies the mass of humanity beneath him,
Mining, farming, toiling in huge factories
Or thronging in and out the revolving doors
Of the Babel towers so lofty that the very spires
Built to soar and point the way to Heaven
Are buried amid the Alpine cliffs of Mammon.
The giant's thoughts revert to the past — to the new
born nation.

Great wealth and great poverty were little known.
Ah! one could live the Simple Life then.
But the young Republic grew rapidly
Wave after wave of immigration swept Westward
Seizing upon new lands,
Consuming the forests
And driving back the red man,
Until intoxicated with the wine of success,
Its rapid growth and its boundless opportunities,
It became vainglorious and boastful.
But a great civil war rended it
And shook it to its very foundations

Until at last, matured by this colossal strife,
It started upon its course
An Empire and a world power
At whose youthful boastings the older nations had ceased
to smile.

Oh, yes, there was much to make the giant happy.
The giant could smile.

He could laugh till the continent shook.

Prosperous, his people, yes,

Fertile in invention,

Boundless in energy and achievement.

But ever the perplexed look returned

As he thought of the vast fortunes, of the poverty and
crime

As he looked upon the great cities,

Upon miles of palaces untenanted half the year,

Upon reeking tenements, swarming with humanity,

Upon asylums and jails springing up like toadstools over
night,

Upon bits of human pulp holding in their feeble grasp,
made strong by the law, pieces of paper that entitled
them to tax the productive power of thousands of
strong men.

We laugh at the divine right of kings to their thrones;

Isn't it time to laugh at the divine right of babies to
their millions?

He saw the imported flunkies and grafters that swarmed
about the palaces that sprang up everywhere.

Graft — Tips — the bleat of the golden calf,

The shadow of that monstrous bulk spread until thousands

of the children of his sturdy pioneers fawned for it
or impudently demanded it.

Surely the causes that piled millions of money in heaps
Piled millions of his people in heaps.

Humanity is gregarious.

But was it sane for millions of men, like a vast herd
of his extinct buffalo, to madly mill about one spot
of earth?

How to lessen poverty and crime,
How to abolish asylums and jails,
How to draw people from the great cities,
How to build more homes and fewer palaces,
How to abolish insane luxury, flunkies and grafters.
Was it not all the same problem?

Oh, yes, he knew all the arguments.

It was the freest country on earth,
But it wasn't free enough for him.

The most prosperous — yes,

But why should prosperity be a disease,

Grow vast goitres of wealth upon one man's neck,

Make him a burden to himself and a god to other men?

With almost inexhaustible resources — with the most en-
ergetic and ingenious people on earth why should
there be recurring hard times — WHY POVERTY?

The rich were as much victims of the system as the poor.

How to give their money away was a problem for the
wisest of men.

You can't change human nature, the pessimists sang.

The giant knew something about human nature.

Was it not the most fluid thing on earth?

Let little Buttercup mix those babies up,
The slum baby would be a little god on wheels,
The millionaire baby grow to think itself a worm.
Oh no, human nature isn't so bad. Give it a chance.

Suddenly the giant springs erect.

All Europe is aflame.

A fanatic had touched a match to the slumbering passions,
the racial pride and the insane fear of each other,
and the nations had sprung to arms.

The greatest military power of the world, the most
CIVILIZED (?) nation had crushed under its iron
heel a gallant nation like a worm in its path — a
worm that would not violate its own soul.

Home to the bosom of the giant came flocking his own
children like doves driven before a storm.

Industry was paralyzed.

The nation held its breath.

My God! What a world?

As in a dream he hears afar vast armies march and wheel
Or writhing and roaring with the maddening pain like
endless pythons lie deadlocked on the plain.

The giant sank on his knees and prayed

Prayed for preparedness — that his own children be not
some day ground under the heel of the Great God
Efficiency.

Preparedness against the time when the warring nations
should sink down amid the ashes and the ruins to
count the cost.

And now the grim spectre of war knocked at his own door.
Would the old order cease to exist?

Would Kings and Princes and Aristocracies fade away?

Would old customs, old ideas, old prejudices be consumed like a tropic jungle in the path of a prairie fire?

And in this new time, fertilized by the sacrifices and the sufferings of those who had perished, would there be created a new world of economic justice, of brotherhood and common sense?

What is an optimist? Is it you,
One of the smiling prosperous few
Who smoothing down an ample vest
Cries — Happy time — See me digest.

Or he whose keener, brooding sight
Beholding spectres of the night
Evolved the simplest, clearest plan
Directest road to the rights of man?

Oh, yes, we know the story's old
Of want and vice and greed and gold,
But don't, my friend of amplest vest,
Declare this world the very best;

That vested wrong is vested right,
Because it's law that black is white,
That feed my lambs means shear my sheep,
The golden rule's not made to keep.

That bread of some be served on gold
Must many starve — be bought and sold?
All men must live. All men must toil.
Get off men's backs and free the soil.

**HUMOROUS — AND SATIRICAL
WISE OR OTHERWISE**

There is no end of making verses
Which some may think the primal curse is,
Though I believe that it much worse is
To murder men and steal their purses,
To slander, lie, or mutter curses,
Or laugh at other men's reverses.
Or harbor wrath which if one nurses
May lead to funerals and hearses.
Rhyme is no crime if one immerses
A grain of sense in myriad verses.
It is a crime if he rehearses
Efforts of his midst smothered curses.
Since there's so much that so much worse is,
Pray pardon me if I make verses.

HORSE SENSE

By Bill Jones, Carpenter and Builder, Athens on the Hudson

WRITE things upon your tombstone but never on
your shack

For you may fail to heed them and they may
answer back.

Carved verses on your chimney and **WELCOME** on the
mat

Don't make the fire no brighter nor tell you where you're
at.

The "*Canty Hearth Where Cronies Meet*" is at Hotel
Bon Air,

But if you want to warm your toes you'll find no fire there,
And as for those poor cronies, in case they ever meet,
Cigar stumps and burnt matches must serve to toast their
feet.

Who was it peppered old New York with Greek and Latin
names?

Did they have horse sense gumption or real blood in their
veins?

You bet it jolts the system — this foreign school book
trash,

But U. S. must digest it if gets into his hash.

We call our village A — THENS, the long A as in hay
And we propose to call it that whatever schools marms
say.

We're just plain countryfarming folk who plough and
dig and sweat,

And not a grain of Attic Salt is in our grub as yet.

Bon Air and Buena Vista are not bad in their way
But names to hang your hat on happen or grow I say.
Black Rock and Skaggs Corners may not be there for
show

But they will stand the climate like a stone fence or a crow.

Rather than some foreign name though it be smooth as
butter,

Take the rugged native thing that breaks your jaws to
utter;

Carved verses on the chimney may serve to show your lack.
Your guest will know he's welcome when his hat hangs
on the rack.

And last don't ask no poet to live up to his verse
For that will only rile him and make the poor man curse.
For he has legs and arms and woes and troubles just the
same

As you, my friend, or old Bill Jones no matter what his
fame.

LITTLE MISS TRIPP

LITTLE Miss Tripp,
A dainty young slip
Of a yellow haired flirtatious maid,
Made eyes at me once,
And I was a dunce
To credit the half that they said.

Such wiles and such arts
For the bustin' of hearts
Oh, little maid, I must deplore.
You tried them on me
Now turned fifty-three,
And you — why, you are not four!

You sit in your chair
With a most demure air,
Your skirts barely reaching the knee,
While your feet from the floor
Hang two feet or more,
In fact your age is scarce three.

What want you of me
Who have turned fifty-three,
Whose ailments get no reduction,
The part on whose skull
Is as broad and as dull
As the road that leads to destruction.

Nancy Hanks ¹ or Directum
How 'ere you perfect 'em
Can't catch up with old Father Time.
My three-year-old colt,
I'm not worth a bolt
And I've fifty years start 'cross the line.

¹ Nancy Hanks and Directum — two famous horses.

THE LION WHO GOT RELIGION

A MUCH BORED lion met, while strayed one night,
A trolley dragon dreadful to the sight,
Which struck and hurled him roaring through the air
Into a crowd who scattered here and there.

"Strange," thought the lion, "now there is no fee
How little people care to see me free.
Another proof that that for which we pay
Loses its value when it's given away."

So musing, down the dim, deserted street
The lion limped until his weary feet
Led to a temple all ablaze with light
Where Hallelujahs rent the veil of night.

'Twas New Year's Eve. At midnight stood the clock.
Br'er Johnson plead and cursed and warned his flock.
"Hell! Hell!" he roared, "'s in store for sinful lyin'
Unless one gits religion befo' dyin'."

Head on one side in cute and knowing wise
The lion paused while tears bedimmed his eyes.
Although from mortal sin as white as snow,
He had been playing hookey from the show.

The lion crouched, then with a mighty crash
He joined that church straight through the window sash.
He got religion and the parson too
But dined alone in Deacon Jones' pew.

Returning late from his unwonted frolic
He died that night, repentant, of the colic,
All that was human of his meal agreed
He died of texts and specs and too much creed.

We have in order to point a moral taken the usual poetic license. The lion did not die nor go home. But when Deacon Jones had summoned sufficient courage to apply his eye to the key hole the next morning he discovered the lion asleep on the register of the Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church dreaming of his tropic jungle. So distended was he that if he had been a lioness the indications would have been cubs and not parsons. The Deacon was in favor of shooting the lion and delivering the pastor at once. But the owner of the circus happening along he was so delighted with the advertising value of the incident that he offered to pay off the mortgage of \$49.75 on the Church if they would allow the lion to digest the pastor. The offer was accepted. These are the facts.

THE AMERICAN SUFFRAGETTE

LEAP YEAR — 1912. HIS ANSWER TO HER PROPOSAL

I KNOW, my dear, you don't defy the majesty of law,
Or smite with all your desperate might its servants
on the jaw,
Nor wrap your sermons round a brick hurled at the tyrant
man,
Or kick or scratch or starve or rage upon the British plan.

I know how like to milk white doves from out a sky of
blue
Your snowy ballots flutter down on saint and sinners too;
How crime and graft would disappear beneath that ermine
robe
And from the infected ship of state you'd drive the last
microbe.

And though when that millennium comes a Senator you
may be
One hand upon the helm of state, the other rocking baby,
Meanwhile you do hurl epithets that sizzle and are heating
And will insist on getting up and interrupting meeting.

Methought that in that verdant isle, blest mother of our
people,
Peace brooded o'er the smiling land — joy chimed from
every steeple.

But, hark, the battle's on again. There flashes through
the waters,
Shrieks, groans and sighs, the maddened cries of Albion's
fair daughters.

In dreams I see the embattled host land on Columbia's
shores.

What statesmen's shins were sacred then? How slake
their thirst for gore?

Skirts tempest tossed, eyes flashing fire, real carnage, all
that's shocking.

And in the van, my own dear wife, with those fierce war-
riors flocking.

So take an ice cream soda, dear. Have a box of Huyler's,
For though my answer must be — "No," I'm not of your
revilers.

Then to the fray ye Belmonts, Shaws, ye Carrie Chapman
Catts.

Swarm out from all your palaces, your tenements, your
flats.

On, Belmont, on! Charge, Pankhurst, charge! Were the
last words of SUSAN B. ANTHONY.

**A GREAT PUGILIST'S INTERVIEW
ON THE CORONATION OF
EDWARD VII**

"I WON the belt," said great John L.,
"By brain and brawn I won it.
On Easy Street I may not dwell,
But I'm the man what done it.

"What in the hell," said great John L.,
"Has Edward ever done?
On Easy Street this king may dwell
But where's the belt he won?"

"King Edward never won no crown
Though his high head may don it.
On Easy Street fate laid it down
And dropped a crown upon it."

Most truly said, oh man of might,
Our uncrowned Cur de Lion.
Much belted knight in many a fight
Whose fame shall be undyin'.

Tis true, most true, oh mighty man,
We're all of that opinion
To him who can tis Nature's plan,
To give fame and dominion.

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But is this all, oh, man of might,
Democracy can teach us?
Both luck and might can strangle right?
Another gospel preach us.

Not brain nor brawn, no form of might
Vice, virtue, luck nor cunning,
Nor legal wrong nor vested right
Shall stop that day's sure coming,

When frowning on ignoble strife
To wrest gain from our brothers
We'll scorn to drink the wine of life
And throw the dregs to others.

THE END



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taken from the Building**

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